

Commissioner Davy Embraces Staff as DHS “Gets Under Way”

Barreling through legislative hearings, a class-action suit and a troubled child welfare system, Commissioner James M. Davy, former chief of management and operations for Governor James E. McGreevey, has turned the Department of Human Services upside down. Over the last six months, he has begun to re-engineer the agency so that it can concentrate all of its resources on protecting and supporting children and at-risk families, troubled youth, low income residents and people who are mentally ill, developmentally disabled, blind, visually impaired, deaf and hard of hearing.

When Governor McGreevey appointed Mr. Davy last February, Mr. Davy immediately recognized the most critical element for the agency’s success: the value of DHS staff and the significance of the work they do for New Jersey residents every day. With an agency that employs more than 20,000 people statewide, Mr. Davy began showing the depth of his commitment to

DHS staff by emailing weekly bulletins that highlight his activities on behalf of the department and also recognize and acknowledge the dedicated service of employees working across southern, central and northern New Jersey.

Soon after his Senate Confirmation on March 22nd, Commissioner Davy’s leadership became more visible as he began circulating among staff. While participating in a whirlwind of activity which has taken him from one end of the state to the other, including advocating for the approval of the state’s new child welfare reform plan, Commissioner Davy continued to make it his goal to engage DHS staff in the process every step of the way. For example, he started personally visiting staff seeking open discussions at the department’s psychiatric hospitals, developmental centers, community programs, DYFS district offices and several field and administrative offices for each of the the department’s 10 divisions.

“The Department of Human Services is a vast and an important agency. I believe the people who work for this important department are fulfilling a noble purpose that deserves to be recognized and encouraged. I intend to do that in every way that I can,”

- Commissioner Davy

“A New Beginning” -- New Jersey’s Child Welfare Reform Plan

The Department of Human Services recently received approval from an independent monitoring panel and the U.S. District Court for an ambitious, comprehensive plan to reform New Jersey’s child welfare system.

The plan, entitled “A New Beginning: The Future of Child Welfare in New Jersey,” envisions a wide array of effective community-based family support and child abuse prevention programs; better access to appropriate behavioral health services for children and adolescents; increased services for parents, particularly substance abuse treatment; improved recruitment, retention and support of foster, adoptive and relative care homes; and a larger, well-trained field staff for the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS).

Governor James E. McGreevey, said “I am very optimistic about this plan, It touches on all elements of the child protection system. I made it quite clear that I was dissatisfied with the state of our child welfare system, and we needed to make drastic structural changes like the ones outline in this plan.”

“This is a new day for the children of New Jersey,” said DHS Commissioner James Davy. “We have a plan that will enable us to remake our child welfare system into one of the best in the country, one that will help make families whole and keep children safe.”

A key element of the plan is a new case practice model for DYFS. The agency will have specialized workers - highly trained forensic investigators who will assess new allegations of child abuse and neglect; permanency workers who will provide ongoing services to at-risk families; and two new categories of workers to specialize in serving adolescents and supporting foster and adoptive families.

Also under the plan, DYFS’ office structure will be reorganized, establishing 46 district offices that will be supervised by 15 “area” offices that encompass either a single county or a multiple-county region corresponding to the Superior Court vicinages. The first four area offices will open in January 2005 in Essex, Passaic, Mercer and Camden counties.

“The counties were chosen because they were deemed high-need areas after an evaluation of the child welfare caseload. The reform process will not be completed overnight. But we must get to the families and areas in need, and we will do it with some urgency,” Commissioner Davy continued.

The “area offices” will have:

- ✓ The capacity to train and retrain workers on state-of-the-art case practice;
- ✓ The staff to support the recruitment and support of hundreds of new resource families;
- ✓ Staff from our two new divisions, Behavioral

As Commissioner Davy kept his pace, moving forward full throttle on behalf of DHS programs, policies and the new reform plan, he continued to state “this department does the most important work that government can do. I applaud DHS staff for your dedication and your service and hope that in our time together at the department, you will always know how highly I value you. I am humbled by the important, meaningful work our people do.” And, true to his intention, Davy’s activities have kept staff in perpetual motion trying to keep up with him, generating good will among dedicated employees who appreciate his effort to get to know them.

In addition, Commissioner Davy has advanced the state’s vision for improving the child welfare system by specifically targeting advocates in the child welfare community, community leaders, neighborhood groups, community organizations, schools, local leaders, civic and religious leaders, state representatives and other stakeholders, seeking their input and assistance to change the lives and health of New Jersey’s children. “Together with our partners in the community, we have developed a blueprint for the future of children in our state that is ambitious, specific and complete,” said Davy.

In June, a federal district court judge approved the State’s new child welfare plan. In addition, the New Jersey State Legislature included the \$125 million that the department needs to implement the new plan in the Fiscal Year 2005 budget, which went into effect on July 1st.

But Commissioner Davy has not slowed his pace. He continues to move forward, still bent on trying to meet as many DHS employees as possible and visiting staff where they work. “The Department of Human Services is a vast and an important agency. The work we do here affects hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people of all ages. I believe the people who work for this important department are fulfilling a noble purpose that deserves to be recognized and encouraged. I intend to do that in every way that I can,” said Commissioner Davy. His goal: A state with a network of support resources to provide the highest quality of living to New Jersey’s most vulnerable adults and children stretching from community to community.



Governor James E. McGreevey, accompanied by Commissioner Davy, speaks about the child welfare reform plan. “Our work overhauling DYFS is underway. We are demanding a new level of accountability from this agency. Together we will get this done,” states Governor McGreevey.

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www.state.nj.us/humanservices/index.html

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Letter from the Commissioner



This has been a good summer for Human Services. Our Department received substantial increases in the Governor’s Fiscal Year 2005 budget. Thanks to Governor McGreevey and the New Jersey Legislature, the DHS budget provides needed funding for the new reform plan and a wide variety of programs for people with disabilities - including community residential and family support services.

Since my appointment, I have been fortunate to receive support from the dedicated staff throughout the department and many of our community partners, both public and private. This kind of support in the New Jersey community is crucial to protecting our children and healing broken homes. We have recognized the value of resetting the organizational culture and the role of accountability. We must seize this opportunity to change the lives and health of countless tens of thousands of New Jerseyans

for generations to come.

Each of you has ongoing responsibilities to the citizens of this state. As I continue to get outside of Trenton as often as possible to meet with our staff and partners in the community, DHS has made great strides in its efforts towards improving the delivery of critical safety net services and making those services accessible and more user-friendly for every individual and family in New Jersey.

I am pleased to share our new initiatives and programs with you. We have made historic steps and are on the brink of fundamental change. We are doing the right thing and have strong community support. I hope you enjoy this issue of DHS News. I look forward to taking more historic steps with you.

James M. Davy

Governor McGreevey Visits DHS Staff



On March 16, Governor McGreevey personally met with DHS staff, the first time in 15 years that a New Jersey Governor has visited with DHS employees at central office.

CBVI’s Project Prevention Eye Screening a Big Hit in Belleville

Project Prevention, working with a community group in Belleville, NJ, conducted an eye screening event for hundreds of citizens on Saturday, June 19th at St. Peter’s School in Belleville.

“Project Prevention is one of CBVI’s best programs,” according to Executive Director Vito DeSantis. Each year Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired provides approximately 45,000 people living in NJ with free eye screening in order to detect symptoms of eye problems that could potentially result in blindness or severe visual impairments. Researchers say 50% of all incidence of blindness could have been prevented by early detection and appropriate eye care.



Commissioner Jim Davy and Deputy Commissioner Terri Wilson (right) tour Woodbridge Developmental Center.

On July 15th, Commissioner Davy toured the Woodbridge Developmental Center in Woodbridge, NJ. The Woodbridge Center is an Intermediate Care Residential Facility for individuals with developmental disabilities. Currently, the facility is designed to accommodate 576 residents who live in 18 Cottages. Each Cottage is the home for 32 individuals.

The majority of the population is the ages of 22 to 45 years. Woodbridge residents have some degree of medical complication in addition to their cognitive disability so there is a great need for a holistic nursing approach and the nursing skills to help coordinate the team who plans and implements their care.

Commissioner Davy, stated “Our goal is to offer more choices and flexibility in planning for individuals with developmental disabilities. The state will continue to take steps to make significant improvements to ensure the safety and well-being of all residents at this facility.”

Faith Based Organizations Support NJ Child Welfare Reform Plan

Dozens of faith-based organizations rallied at the Department of Human Services (DHS) in Trenton on May 19th to support New Jersey’s child welfare reform plan. DHS Commissioner Davy was shown unprecedented collaboration from men and women of faith demonstrating their commitment to protecting children and strengthening families throughout New Jersey.

“One of the strengths of every community is a house of worship. When all else fails in life where else can you turn but to a church or synagogue or mosque. By partnering with these faith-based groups, we truly can make a difference in people’s lives,” stated Commissioner Davy who, in his efforts to reform the state’s child welfare system, has recognized the need for partnerships with religious and civic institutions, community organizations, neighborhood groups, block associations and more.

“We all care about our children and families,” Commissioner Davy continued. “We’re not talking about DYFS (Division of Youth and Family Services) children. We’re talking about all children who live in New Jersey and how we as a community need to do better.”



Members of the faith-based community stand together with Commissioner Davy to support the state's child welfare reform plan.

Unlike past reform efforts, DHS will build on local strengths in local communities and provide services in the neighborhoods where they are needed most. Through the creation of a new Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships, the

Department will partner with local government, community providers, faith-based organizations and other stakeholders to identify local needs, so appropriate resources and services may be developed in local communities.

New Hotline and Call Screening Center for New Jersey Residents

The Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) recently launched a call screening center and a new hotline for New Jersey residents to report any occurrence of child abuse and neglect seen in their community. The plan is to ensure that all calls made to the agency receive consistent evaluation and response.

The central hotline, 1-877-NJ ABUSE (652-2873), began operating in July as part of the preliminary steps aimed at reforming New Jersey’s child welfare system. The new centralized call center which operates 24 hours a day, every day of the year, replaces local screeners at more than 30 DYFS district offices, along with a former after-hours and weekend hotline.

About 40 screeners staff the new call center on weekdays, assisting residents by assessing child abuse and neglect allegations from across the state. Most of the screeners are veteran DYFS workers with experience screening calls at the district offices, the Institutional Abuse Investigations Unit, or the old after-hours hotline.

DHS Commissioner James Davy said, “In the past, DYFS’ response to a report might depend on who answered the call. The goal of this centralized screening operation is to ensure that DYFS evaluates and responds to every report consistently and

appropriately, wherever and whenever it happens in New Jersey.”

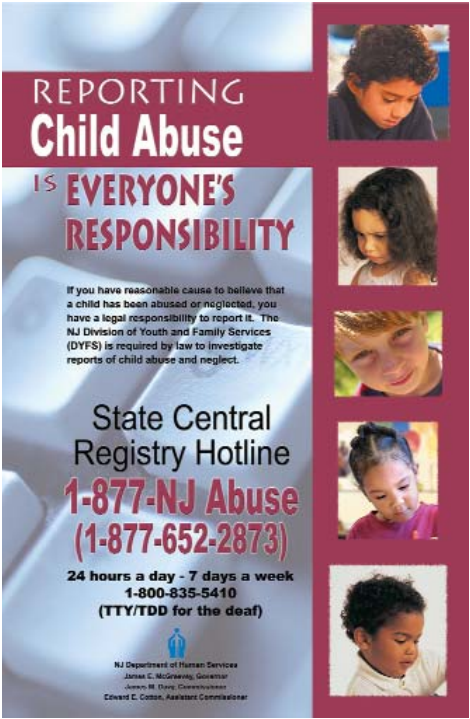
“For the past 18 months, the DYFS caseload expanded so rapidly we could barely keep up with it,”

Commissioner Davy continued. “One reason is that we were opening some cases that did not really warrant DYFS investigations. As a result, our staff was hard-pressed to give the proper attention to children who are truly at risk.”

Under the child welfare reform plan, each county in New Jersey will establish community collaboratives - organizations that will foster the development of programs to support families and prevent child abuse and neglect. When that system is in place, calls about child welfare concerns that do not rise to the level of child abuse or neglect can be referred to a collaborative and then to a community-based service provider.

Meanwhile, DYFS will continue to respond to child welfare calls, assess the children’s safety and, when appropriate, refer families to services that already exist within their community.

“The system of referring non-abuse and neglect calls to community agencies will help keep kids safe,” Commissioner Davy said, “because our investigators and caseworkers will be able to direct focus on children who are at risk of harm or who already have been abused or neglected.”



DHS Welcomes New Human Service Police

Congratulations to the 20 new Human Services Police who graduated with the 92nd Basic Police Recruit Class of the Trenton Police Academy at a ceremony recently held at the Trenton War Memorial. The graduate class was ushered into and out of the ceremony by the Somerset County Pipes and Drums before a standing-room-only crowd of friends, family members and DHS employees.

“We welcome you as an integral part of our department as we move forward to enact the new Child Welfare Reform Plan, which will help us enhance the safety and security of children, families, our DYFS workers, and DHS facilities across the state,” said Commissioner Davy. Distinguished guests included Mercer County Prosecutor Joseph L. Bocchini, Jr., Trenton Police Director Joseph J. Santiago, and Trenton Police Academy Commander Captain Joseph M. Dolina, who gave out special awards.

The Human Services Police Department provides an invaluable service, policing our institutions and providing security to DHS employees. The new class of officers enabled DHS to fully staff a unit that will accompany caseworkers from the Division of Youth and Family Services when they need assistance or protection investigating child abuse allegations.

Human Services Police receiving special awards were: William Lovas, III of North Brunswick - Firearms Award; Joel Blake of Blackwood - Physical Training Award; James Jackson of Toms River - Vehicle Operator Award; and Frank Scarpa of West

Paterson - Academic Excellence Award.

The new Department of Human Services Police, by county, are: Jodi Ackerman of Atlantic City - Atlantic County; John Fano of River Vale and Steven Lemanowicz of North Arlington - Bergen County; Joel Blake, Blackwood - Camden County; Benjamin

Estrada and Martin Gutierrez, both of Belleville - Essex County; Scott Mickalich of Williamstown - Gloucester County; Natisha Etheridge of West New York, Edward Mari of Bayonne, and Donald Wilson, Jr. of Kearny - Hudson County; Thomas H. Brown of Trenton - Mercer County; Alan Barboiu of Metuchen, Jose Curbelo of Old Bridge, and Joseph Dell Beni and William Lovas III, both of North Brunswick - Middlesex County; James Jackson of Toms River - Ocean County; Iris Reyes of Paterson and Frank Scarpa of West Paterson - Passaic County; and Theodore Schnetzer of Stanhope - Sussex County .



New Human Service Police graduates of the 92nd Basic Police Recruit Class of the Trenton Police Academy.

DHS Budget Approved

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will implement some important new programs, and will maintain vital existing programs, under the new state budget adopted by the New Jersey State Legislature and signed by Governor McGreevey at the end of June.

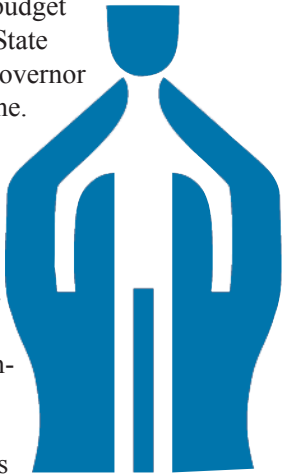
The department’s appropriation of almost \$4.7 billion in state funding is about \$400 million more than it received in Fiscal Year 2004 and about \$93.7 million more than the amount recommended in the preliminary budget released in February. Significant new expenditures in this year’s budget include \$125 million appropriated for New Jersey’s Child Welfare Reform Plan and approximately \$28 million to support the activities of the Division of Addiction Services, which recently moved to DHS from the Department of Health and Senior Services.

“We are very pleased with the department’s budget for the next fiscal year,” said Commissioner James M. Davy. “This department and all the people who work here are committed to fulfilling a noble purpose on behalf of New Jersey’s most vulnerable residents. I want to thank Governor McGreevey and the Legislature for recognizing and supporting our very valuable and worthwhile work.”

Among the important new initiatives funded in this year’s budget are:

- \$125 million for the child welfare reform plan, which was approved by a federal district court judge in June. This plan is the blueprint for a total transformation of New Jersey’s child welfare system, and goes far beyond extensive changes planned at the Division of Youth and Family Services.
- A 3.5 percent increase for the non-profit, community agencies that contract with DHS to provide services to our clients. The budget as initially proposed by Governor McGreevey allotted only a one percent increase. But the non-profits and the advocates lobbied hard throughout the spring for more money, and the Governor, the Commissioner, and the Legislature responded. Also, the budget legislation allows the Commissioner to allocate an additional one-half of one percent to the non-profits, if the department can find money in its budget.
- An increase of almost \$12 million for personal assistant services for people with disabilities on Medicaid.
- More than \$20 million to support existing community group homes and pay for new group homes for a total of 750 people with disabilities.
- Additional funding for Real Life Choices, a new option that provides more services and programs for people with developmental disabilities who are on the priority waiting list for residential placement in the community and their families.
- Continued funding for restructuring the state’s behavioral health system through Redirection II. This will allow the development of more community programming in order to provide the broadest range of residential placement options for mental health consumers.

“I believe that this budget, more than any other budget of recent memory, will help to redefine the way New Jersey serves its most vulnerable residents,” said Commissioner Davy. “It is a good budget that will support our good works, and it is a budget that will continue to help the most vulnerable residents of this state.”



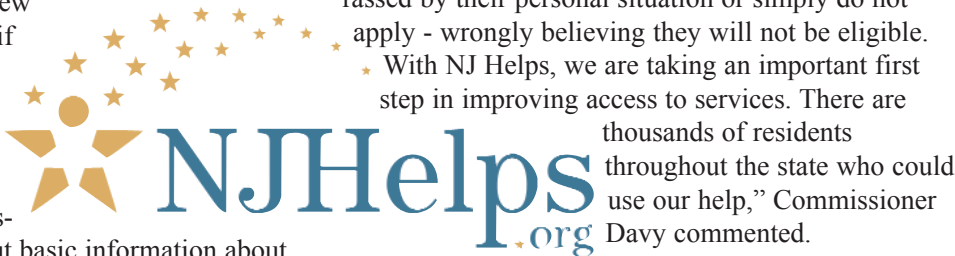
NJHelps.org

Website Helps Residents Access Services

Commissioner Davy unveiled the state’s NJ Helps Website (<http://www.njhelps.org>) on July 19th to help New Jersey residents determine if they are eligible for eight programs offered by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

The new website allows residents to anonymously input basic information about their household and finances and in return learn if they are likely to be eligible for eight different programs offered through the DHS’ Division of Family Development and Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services.

These programs are: food stamps, general assistance or GA, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families better known as TANF, Medicaid, New Jersey Family Care, child care assistance, kinship care and Low Income Home Energy Assistance also known as LIHEAP.



“Unfortunately, many families fail to apply for services,” said Commissioner Davy. “They might be embarrassed by their personal situation or simply do not apply - wrongly believing they will not be eligible. With NJ Helps, we are taking an important first step in improving access to services. There are thousands of residents throughout the state who could use our help,” Commissioner Davy commented.

In addition, the website provides information on local offices, what documents are needed to apply and links to online applications for food stamps, New Jersey Family Care or LIHEAP that can be printed, filled out and then mailed or faxed.

Phase two of NJ Helps includes plans to add the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and New Jersey Earned Income Tax Credit (NJETIC). DHS is also working with the Departments of Health and Senior Services and Labor and Workforce Development about possibly adding some of their programs to the NJ Helps website.

A New Beginning, cont'd from pg. 1

- Health and Prevention and Community Partnerships, to fully integrate those new entities into DYFS’ work with communities;
 - ✓ Links with active community collaboratives to shape and direct local services.
- New district offices will have:
- ✓ Specialized forensic investigator/intake units;
 - ✓ Workers using a one-worker/one-family model (meaning once a case is out of intake a permanency worker takes over until the case is resolved either through adoption, ongoing supervision or reunification);
 - ✓ Workers to specialize in serving aging out youth and providing support to resource families;
 - ✓ A police officer on site to assist in investigations;
 - ✓ A nurse on site to handle medical screenings and to ensure that the medical needs of children are assessed and addressed.

“Our new district offices will be fully integrated, full service, family-centered offices that are located where the needs are greatest,” Commissioner Davy said. “It’s important for us to be in the neighborhoods, because we need to develop relationships. We are going to assign cases on a geographic basis, and we are going to dramatically reduce each individual worker’s caseload.”

The remaining “area offices” will be phased in, with five offices opening in July 2005 and the final six offices in January 2006. Other elements of the reform plan go statewide right away, particularly in the critical area of training.

All DYFS supervisors and workers are receiving training in Structured Decision Making, a series of research-supported tools that enable workers to better identify and address risks to children and family team meetings. These training activities are case practice cornerstones of the entire reform effort. “We also are working, through our training academy, to develop a training curriculum for all DYFS management and for conducting forensic investigations,” Commissioner Davy said. “This fall, we will begin training in both of those areas.”

This spring, 72 new caseworkers were added at DYFS, and another 381 will be hired in the current budget year. Of those, 160 workers began training in July. Under the caseload reduction initiative, DYFS will:

- ✦ Redeploy 57 experienced workers to serve on “impact teams” that will be dispatched to various offices statewide. These teams will relieve local DYFS workers either by taking over intake cases - new allegations of abuse or neglect - or by working to close backlogged cases on children who appear to be safe yet whose case files remain open because workers have been unable to complete paperwork and other requirements.
- ✦ Contract with an outside agency, PRN, that will provide temporary social workers to relieve DYFS workers by conducting collateral contacts on cases; making visits to children whose cases were targeted for closure; and evaluating risk factors for children under supervision to identify additional cases that could be safely closed.

The initiative is designed to help bring the caseloads of individual workers down to 12 cases total, and no more than eight new ones per month, for investigators, and 15 families for permanency workers. The goal is to achieve the caseload standards for 95 percent of the permanency workers in four counties, Camden, Essex, Mercer and Gloucester, by June 2005.

The second phase targets Cumberland, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Passaic and Salem counties, with the goal to reduce the caseload for 95 percent of the permanency workers by September 2005. In the remaining counties, Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Cape May, Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren, the goal is to reduce the caseload for 95 percent of the permanency workers by January 2006.

For investigators, the caseload target will be achieved statewide by August 2005.

Tornado hits campus of New Lisbon Developmental Center



Dozens of trees were uprooted and the thrift shop was destroyed by a tornado on the campus of the New Lisbon Developmental Center on Tuesday July 27th. Fortunately, only two staff members received minor injuries. One building was totally destroyed with several others sustaining minor damage. Special thanks to New Lisbon staff who worked tirelessly to clean-up and repair the damage.

Division of Addiction Services Moves to DHS

The Division of Addiction Services (DAS) moved, officially, from the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) to DHS in the spring under a reorganization ordered by Governor McGreevey. The transfer includes Compulsive Gambling, Community-based Substance Abuse Treatment and Prevention, In-State Juvenile Residential Treatment, and Substance Abuse treatment for DYFS/WorkFirst Mothers.

The mission of the DAS, led by Assistant Commissioner Carolann Kane-Cavaiola, is to decrease misuse or abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs by New Jerseyans by supporting the development of a comprehensive network of prevention, intervention and treatment services in New Jersey. The division employs 147 people and has an annual budget of \$146.7 million, most of which funds grants to community-based organizations that provide drug and alcohol treatment and related services. One program formerly under DAS, the Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program, remained within DHSS.

“It seemed logical that addiction services should be coordinated under DHS,” said Commissioner James Davy. “Thousands of our clients already receive these services, yet many more need them - people with mental illnesses, individuals on welfare, and parents and teens who are involved with the Division of Youth and Family Services. The Governor felt that we can better serve people if this department takes the lead in planning where and how these services are delivered.”

The DAS funds more than 250 local agencies and community-based organizations that comprise a comprehensive network of prevention, intervention and treatment services. Nearly 54,000 New Jersey residents received treatment services through the division during the last year.

Along with the departmental transfer, the division received a \$10 million funding increase to create 862 new treatment slots for drug-and alcohol-abusing parents who are in danger of losing their children. The new slots will serve about 2,500 families in the coming year.

School-Based Youth Services Program Expands

As a key part of the State’s plan to reform its child welfare system, the New Jersey Department of Human Services will double the successful School-Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP) by increasing funding by \$12.8 million (currently \$8 million to \$20.8 million) over the next two fiscal years. Today, the program is located at 44 school districts statewide and serves more than 75,000 teenagers each year.

On April 21st, Commissioner Davy heard from every student who took part in the announcement, held at Perth Amboy High School’s SBYSP, as students told him how much the program meant to them. Most students stressed how important it was to have SBYSP counselors available to listen to them about all kinds of life problems. “SBYSP is a proven national model designed to help our most at-risk youth,” said Commissioner Davy. “It helps adolescents build self-esteem while also developing pride in themselves and in their communities.”



Commissioner Davy (second from right) announces increased program funding while listening to students from Perth Amboy SBYSP share their concerns.

The New Jersey SBYSP has received wide-spread recognition in local and national media and in government and foundation reports. The SBYSP model is being replicated in a number of states, including Iowa, Kentucky and California.

Founded in 1988, SBYSP brings comprehensive supports directly to adolescents. The “one-stop shopping” design breaks down barriers that too often prevent young people from obtaining services and supports. Each SBYSP site provides core services such as crisis counseling, mental health and family counseling, substance abuse, and employment services and summer and after-school programs.

A three-year evaluation of SBYSP found it to be effective in helping adolescents address problems. Funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and conducted by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), the evaluation found SBYSP adolescents show increased aspirations and higher accumulation of credits toward graduation; less destructive behavior and feelings of anger. Participating adolescents also learn conflict resolution.

‘SAFE SLEEP’ - Help Communities Prevent Infant Deaths

On a Thursday morning in April, Commissioner Davy met with pediatric experts from the Our Child Fatality and Near Fatality Review Board (CFNFRB) to demonstrate to the public the do’s and don’ts for babies’ sleep environments and announced the “Safe Baby Sleep Campaign,” a comprehensive plan for educating communities to the many common sense dangers for infants.

“Over the last three years, 176 babies have died in sleep-related incidents in New Jersey. This is a serious public health issue, and we must continue to educate communities about prevention efforts for safeguarding New Jersey’s children,” stated Davy.



DHS unveils Safe Baby Sleep Campaign, a comprehensive plan for educating communities to the many common sense dangers for infants.

With prevention one of the major components of the department’s child welfare reform plan, Davy continues to urge healthcare professionals, teen counselors, public and faith-based agencies to reach out to new parents and caregivers to teach them about safer sleep practices.

“Parents sleeping in the same beds with their children, or co-sleeping, is one of the largest contributors to sleep-related infant deaths. Our Child Fatality and Near Fatality Review Board (CFNFRB) has spotted these trends, and we need to change people’s behavior, Davy continued.

Davy also unveiled “Safe Sleep” brochures in English and in Spanish, produced by the NJ Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, at the urging of the CFNFRB. These materials are also available for any member of the general public who requests them.

Bruce Springsteen surprises Asbury Park SBYSP with matching donation

A Sunday afternoon motorcycle ride by Bruce Springsteen turned into a surprise influx of funds for the fundraiser for the School Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP) that runs out of Asbury Park High School, bumping the grand total raised to \$11,000 -- a first for the statewide counseling programs for high school students.

On Sunday May 23rd, the Asbury Park business community threw a benefit “Poker Run,” the name for a motorcycle run that raises money, to extend the SPOT program. SPOT is the name that Asbury Park High School students gave to the programs, because “it’s our spot to go to.” It provides adult supervision, outings for teenagers after school, and a safe place for students to turn to whenever they need to discuss problems.

The 60-mile run began at Just Plain Janes’ in Jackson Township and ended in Asbury Park. Tom Patten, owner of the Cross Roads Café, donated use of his club for the event, local businesses and friends pro-

vided door prizes, several bands played, and supporters provided both home-cooked and catered ethnic food.

Three volunteer friends of SPOT organized the run: Nancy Muscatello, a Wall Street investment banker who volunteers with SBYSP; plus John Sarica and Bobby Reyes. Their organizational efforts plus sponsorship pledges raised \$5500 in one day.

Then along came Bruce Springsteen on his motorcycle, out for a Sunday ride. He stopped, asked about the SBYSP, then offered to match the proceeds! So the Asbury site now has \$11,000 to enrich the program.

The Coaster, an Asbury Park weekly, covered the story with an article and picture, ending with a note encouraging donors to send other gifts.

“A first for SBYSP, I must say,” said Roberta Knowlton, state director of SBYSP, who pointed out this has never happened to any of the other SBYSP.

“Are You in the Loop?”

The DHS Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) held its first statewide conference on April 29th at the Lafayette Yard Marriott Hotel in Trenton. This year’s theme was “Are you in the Loop?” to illuminate the fact that many people with hearing loss do not receive information as rapidly as others - through radio public address systems, etc., due to their hearing loss. Also, a “loop” (audio-loop) is a piece of equipment that amplifies sound and enables people who are hard of hearing to understand the spoken word.



Commissioner Davy encouraged attendees and their families to “stay up to date on the technological environment which is changing so quickly, to learn about DDHH resources and to discuss new ideas for increasing accessibility and services for people who are deaf and hard of hearing.” The Commissioner promised there would be more conferences of this nature.

The conference covered updates on the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening test, educational interpreters’ code of licensing, cochlear implants, laws against discrimination, and new legislation, Grace’s Law, which would require health insurers to provide coverage for hearing aids. Exhibitors included booths with new technology and assistive devices, information on service dogs, books about sign language, and agencies that provide resources and services. The conference was co-sponsored by Northeast Technical Assistance Center (NETAC) and Camden County College.

**RETIREMENT PLANNING SEMINAR
FOR PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS**

Speakers will cover:

- *Pensions and Benefits*
- *Social Security*
- *Financial Planning*

When - Friday, October 1, 2004
Time - 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.
Where - New Jersey Library for the Blind and Handicapped, Trenton, NJ

The seminar will be voiced in English. **Sign Language Interpreters, Realtime Captioning, and Assistive Listening Devices** will be provided. If you need other accommodations, please contact the Division of Pensions and Benefits.

To obtain a registration form or additional information:
Visit our Web site at:
www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions

Registrations can be faxed to the attention of:
Nikki Kowalski - (609) 292-9500

Questions regarding the seminar can be directed to Nikki at:
Nichole.Kowalski@treas.state.nj.us

- Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. -

Space is very limited - register early!

Hosted by New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits in conjunction with New Jersey New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

**NEW JERSEY
CONFERENCE ON
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

**A Vision for Children:
Strengthening Families
and Communities**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2004
SHERATON PARSIPPANY HOTEL
PARSIPPANY, NEW JERSEY 07054

**NEW JERSEY TASK FORCE ON
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

**For conference registration information,
please call (609) 292-0888**

News in Brief

Keeping Children Safe: NJ Cares Institute

In June DHS and the UMDNJ School of Medicine’s Center for Children’s Support announced the formation of a new strategic partnership, NJ CARES (Child Abuse Research Education and Service) Institute, which will provide research of best practices nationally and create protocols for treating abused children at the regional diagnostic treatment centers located throughout the state.

Commissioner Davy committed \$1.5 million to the Center for Children’s Support to help establish NJ CARES that will also help train Division of Youth and Family Services staff and other professionals in recognizing the medical/mental health needs of children and families.

Students from DHS Regional Schools enjoy “Dreamlift” to Disney World on May 11th.



Special kids’ lives were brightened thanks to Sunshine Foundation and their volunteers.

Foster Child CEO Bob Danzig speaks to Division of Youth and Family Services Staff

Over the last couple of months, former Hearst Newspaper Group CEO Bob Danzig -- an author, motivational speaker, and former CEO of the Hearst Newspaper Group -- has been visiting DYFS District Offices addressing state child welfare employees about his life as a foster child and how his social worker saved his life and gave him a future. His message particularly resonates with

the state’s child welfare workers reinforcing the difference they can make in children’s lives. Mr. Danzig encourages DHS staff not to forget that they too are worthwhile and ought to be proud of their successes. “You never know when you’re going to be the instrument of hope in someone’s life by saying, ‘You are worthwhile. I would prefer that New Jersey have the audacity to line itself up to be a model for the rest of the nation,” Danzig stated.

People on the Move . . .

JAMES W. SMITH, was named Deputy Commissioner, overseeing the divisions of Family Development and Medical Assistance and Health Services and the offices for the Prevention of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, and Early Care and Education; **SHAWN MCINERNEY** has been appointed Regional Assistant Director for the Northern and Upper Central Regions for the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD); **FRED GOLUB** has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of Green Brook Regional Center; **MARY DITRI** joined us as Director of the Office of Training. Most recently, she was Director of Organizational Development for Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch, New Jersey; **JENNIFER FAHEY** assumed the position of Director of Policy and Planning for the Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships; **PABLO ALBILAL** joined the Implementation Team as Resource Family Coordinator; **JOSEPH E. OCHS** moved to the position of Chief of Staff; **ROLANDO TORRES** has assumed the position of Special Deputy Commissioner for Legal, Policy and Legislative Affairs; **CAROLE DORTCH-WRIGHT** joined DHS as Assistant Commissioner for External Relations and Constituent Affairs; **LORRAINE THOMAS-DANZY** moved to the position of Deputy Chief of Staff; **FREIDA PHILLIPS** has joined the Office of Family and Community

Services as Special Assistant; **CHERYL BLODGETT** joined DHS in the position of Confidential Assistant; **CAROL GRANT** is now acting DDD Director, **CORYNDI SCOTT** is the Commissioner’s Secretary; **BETH MCGINNIS** is now the Project Manager responsible for implementing the Child Welfare Plan; **FRANCISCO ORTIZ** has become Implementation Manager for Facilities and Support Services for the OCS; **GERALD SUOZZO** has been appointed Assistant Commissioner for Program Integrity & Accountability; **PAM RONAN** has joined the Office of Services for People with Disabilities as Executive Assistant; **NANCY CARUSO** moved to the Office of the Commissioner as Special Assistant; **KATHI WAY** is Assistant Commissioner of Child Behavior Health Services and currently serves as Acting Deputy Commissioner of Children’s Services; **ED COTTON** is now the Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Youth and Family Services; **CARLA COOKE-HARRIS** has been named Assistant Commissioner for Prevention and Community Partnerships.

Best Wishes to Dave Heins from DHS



Joined by his family, Senator Richard Codey (right) and Senator Wayne Bryant (left) DHS Deputy Commissioner Dave Heins, (2nd from left), was recognized with a Senate Resolution, sponsored by Senator Bryant, honoring his retirement after 25 years of state service in a State House Ceremony on June 21st.

Dated Material Please Rush

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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